

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Iraq says it is relocating troops from Basra area after Security Council expresses concern at reported movements towards border with Kuwait.
- + Secretary-General expresses satisfaction at resignation of General Cédras as Commander of Haitian Armed Forces.
- + Saint Kitts and Nevis says international community must mobilize resources to rebuild Haitian economy; Barbados, Dominica, Maldives, Iceland and Nepal also speak in General Assembly's general debate.
- + Libya condemns international terrorism and says it will accept trial of Lockerbie suspects under Scottish law; Swaziland, Viet Nam, Solomon Islands and Thailand among other speakers in general debate on Friday.
- + Economic and Financial Committee begins debate on world economic situation; Algeria says United Nations must have more resources for operational activities for development.
- + UNHCR launches winter aid programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina; reports far fewer problems than in past two years.

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Iraq's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoon, today said his Government had decided to move its troops from the Basra area to another location, given the Security Council's concern over the matter. He told correspondents at Headquarters that it was the right of any Government to move its troops from time to time within its own territory. He expressed the hope that the removal of the troops would resolve the situation which had begun to develop on Friday.

On Saturday, the Council expressed grave concern at reports that substantial numbers of Iraqi troops, including units of the Iraqi Republican Guard, were being moved towards the border with Kuwait. In a statement by its

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President, Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom), the Council asked the Secretary-General to ensure that the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) redoubled its vigilance and immediately reported any violation of the demilitarized zone or any potentially hostile act.

The Secretary-General today expressed concern about the Iraqi attitude towards Kuwait as reflected in recent statements and actions. He noted that those actions were contrary to the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions governing the situation, and emphasized Iraq's obligation to comply fully with all resolutions for the maintenance of international peace and security. Iraq's immediate and unqualified recognition of the Iraq-Kuwait border, as defined in resolution 833 (1993), and full cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission would contribute to lessening tension in the region, as well as to reducing the suffering of the Iraqi people, he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed satisfaction at the resignation of Lieutenant-General Raoul Cédras as Commander of the Haitian Armed Forces and the transfer of command to Major-General Jean-Claude Duperval. He noted that Brigadier-General Philippe Biamby and Colonel Michel François were reported to have already submitted their resignations.

The Secretary-General said the resignations were positive steps towards implementation of Security Council resolution 940 (1994). He expressed the hope that they would facilitate the return to power of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the restoration of democracy in Haiti.

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Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, today expressed support for the action taken by the United States and the international community to ensure compliance with Security Council resolution 940 (1994). He told the General Assembly that the process of establishing democracy in Haiti would be only just beginning with the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The international community must mobilize financial and technical resources to ensure the rebuilding of the country's economy and institutions. Saint Kitts and Nevis was ready to assist the Haitian people in that endeavour.

The Declaration of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was welcome as it recognized the special needs of those States, he went on to say. Their very survival depended on the sustainable development of human resources and the use of scarce material resources. However, small island developing States rarely received adequate support from the developed world; when they managed to raise their standard of living to a decent level, the international community withdrew its support under the pretext that per capita income was too high. The Barbados Declaration underscored the fact that small island developing States had sovereign rights over their natural resources. Developed countries should not link economic assistance, trade and investment with environmental protection.

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Billie Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Barbados, today said small countries such as Barbados faced many challenges in sustaining people-oriented development. Her Government sought to address them by working with its people for a strong position in the global community. Barbados viewed the situation in Haiti with concern. Its participation in the multinational force and the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) reflected a commitment to ensuring that the will of the Haitian people was respected and that their lawful President was restored to office. The Governments of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) had agreed to provide assistance to develop a civilian force to maintain peace and respect for human rights in Haiti.

Throughout CARICOM, the private and public sectors were increasing their collaboration, she continued. At the same time, intergovernmental and economic cooperation was expanding. Concerted efforts were being made to boost trade and to improve economic, social and cultural well-being. The Association of Caribbean States had recently been established to unite the development efforts of the 40 Caribbean-basin States. The Association sought to develop the potential of the Caribbean, to improve opportunities for trade and investment, and to establish structures and arrangements responsive to the region's needs. She appealed to the United States to lift the economic embargo against Cuba so that it could be reintegrated into the world economy.

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Prime Minister Mary Eugenia Charles of Dominica said the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would be significantly strengthened if the General Assembly abandoned the selective condemnation of human rights abuses. Those abuses should be condemned wherever and whenever they occurred. She called on all States to work for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and expressed concern at the international community's apparent unwillingness to stem the production of conventional arms. Such weapons were frequently acquired by third world States ostensibly to deter aggression, but often became instruments of internal repression and the cause of national and regional instability. Shifting resources from building unnecessary arsenals to development programmes would result in great social and economic benefits.

She went on to express support for the establishment of the World Trade Organization and the liberalization of trade practices. The fragile economies of small island States could be destroyed if free trade did not include some measure of fairness. Dominica hoped that the recent formation of the Association of Caribbean States would provide the framework for increased trade among the States of the region. The forthcoming summit of the Americas and the detailed examination of hemispheric integration could provide an impetus for collaboration on matters of regional trade.

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Fathulla Jameel, Foreign Minister of Maldives, urged the General Assembly to give adequate attention to the agenda item on the protection and security

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of small States. The vulnerability of small States was clearly demonstrated in the case of Kuwait in 1990. Recent cases when the United Nations took firm and decisive action highlighted the importance of the collective security system envisaged in the Charter. They also indicated the need for a rapid-response system if international peace and security were to be maintained. Success in maintaining peace also depended on progress in the field of disarmament. While there had been some significant achievements, the production, stockpiling and sale of weapons of war prevailed worldwide.

He said he was dismayed that despite the recent conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade talks, developing countries had not been helped to maintain economic growth. The gap between the developed and developing countries was increasing, while protectionism in trade persisted. South-South cooperation was more necessary than ever to encourage development efforts on the basis of collective self-reliance. At the same time, North-South dialogue was essential in order to promote common interests and benefits.

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The representative of Iceland, Gunnar Palsson, said the United Nations was being saddled with new responsibilities without receiving adequate resources. While the Organization should be transformed into a more effective instrument for dealing with issues beyond the compass of individual States, it should not be considered a substitute for national governments. The need to focus on economic progress must not blind the world to needs in other areas. In view of successful United Nations efforts to promote sustainable development worldwide, measures must be taken to protect the environment from detrimental patterns of production and development. Iceland was particularly concerned at the deteriorating condition of the world's oceans.

The marine ecosystem was now in greater danger than ever before from pollution and overfishing, he continued. Although much had been done to protect the oceans, existing conventions aimed at containing pollution covered only part of the problem, as no global scheme addressed pollution from land-based activities. Iceland attached great importance to the Conference on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, to be convened in Washington next year under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

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Nepal's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Jayaraj Acharya, said the current preoccupation with peace-keeping operations should not deflect attention from efforts to achieve disarmament under effective international control. The Non-Aligned Movement, of which Nepal was a founding member, had called for a special session of the Assembly on Disarmament to assess progress towards global disarmament. The United Nations Regional Centers for Peace and Disarmament were important in strengthening the Organization's role in arms control and disarmament, as they provided a

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much-needed forum for the exchange of views. The Center for Asia and the Pacific had already held several meetings to promote dialogue and interaction.

Nepal stressed the need for timely implementation of Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Commission on Sustainable Development had made a good start and must not be allowed to falter. In addition to providing more financial resources and transferring environmentally sound technology to developing countries, the international community should concentrate on moderating consumption and waste in industrialized countries. He noted that Nepal was determined to implement structural adjustment programmes and economic liberalization policies, including privatization.

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Omar Mustafa Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of Libya, told the General Assembly on Friday that certain States had been using international organs to impose their control and expand their hegemony. They used the Security Council to punish countries which stuck to their principles by adopting independent policies. That was the context of the dispute between Libya and France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Action had been pushed through the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, even though Libya had not threatened anyone or jeopardized international peace and security.

Libya had taken many steps to pinpoint responsibility for the terrorist acts against the American and French planes and had cooperated with French and British investigations. Instead of accepting Libya's calls for talks, the States in question had persuaded the Council to tighten sanctions. Their aim was not to uncover the truth but to achieve political goals. Libya had condemned international terrorism and declared its readiness to combat the scourge. Its territory, citizens and institutions would not be used for terrorist acts, and it would severely punish those involved in them. Libya had accepted a proposal that the two suspects in the Lockerbie bombing be tried by Scottish judges, under Scottish law, in the seat of the International Court of Justice. All it wanted was for the trial to be fair, just, and free from emotional or media influences, and in accordance with the norms of international law.

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Prince Mbilini Dlamini of Swaziland told the General Assembly on Friday that conflicts in Africa and elsewhere challenged the belief that man could ever live peacefully. He supported an integrated approach to conflict resolution in Africa. United Nations resources were being over-extended, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had moved to establish regional responses to those situations. The OAU was the best place to mobilize the efforts of its members, while the United Nations could continue to play its role as

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coordinator of the international response. Many African conflicts could have been prevented if a mechanism had already been in place. He welcomed Assembly discussion of the matter, so that a plan of action could be agreed on quickly.

Africa understood its responsibility to address the issues obstructing its development, he continued. The need was clear, but the resources and ability of African countries were limited. Long-term sustainable development could not be achieved without short-term assistance from the international community. Swaziland had adopted a broad and integrated approach aimed at achieving sustainable, human-centred development. Its policies focused on the reduction of poverty, universal access to primary school and affordable primary health care.

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Viet Nam's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Manh Cam, noted that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of an independent, free and democratic Viet Nam. The country was currently pursuing a path of renewal in every sphere of social life, including the development of a multi-sectoral economy operating through the market mechanism, with regulation by the State. It was also carrying out a renovation of the political system and administrative reform. After the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1992, the National Assembly had adopted new civil, labour, land and investment laws. Viet Nam was shifting to a new stage of development involving industrialization and modernization.

Viet Nam's policy of openness and cooperation with other countries coincided with the trend towards peace and cooperation for development around the world, particularly in south-east Asia, he said. Viet Nam had received observer status with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1992, and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers had recently expressed support for Viet Nam's full membership. All 10 countries of south-east Asia had participated in the recent ASEAN regional forum on regional security. They should consolidate existing points of agreement and narrow their differences to settle disputes, including those on the Eastern Sea. The lifting of the United States embargo against Viet Nam had opened up new prospects for cooperation between the two countries, and the embargo against Cuba should also be ended.

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Francis Saemala, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Solomon Islands, said that the five-year old crisis on Bougainville, a province of Papua New Guinea, had spilled into his country. Through a process of dialogue between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, several important agreements had been signed. The Solomon Islands had played a conciliatory role in the conflict and supported the Bougainville Peace Conference. Regarding New Caledonia, his country had requested the Government of France and the territorial authorities to increase

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efforts towards real economic and social redistribution. Further implementation of the Matignon Accords was needed.

The Solomon Islands supported the decision by the South Pacific Forum to seek United Nations observer status at the present session of the Assembly, he continued. It also supported the Forum's position that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should be extended indefinitely. He urged all Forum partners to ratify the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Hazardous and radioactive waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean was not to be encouraged. The Solomon Islands was also firmly opposed to the transshipment and transboundary movement of plutonium in the region. He called on the international community to support the Joint Declaration on Economic and Trade Cooperation recently signed between Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

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Thailand's Foreign Minister, Prasong Soonsiri, said the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had taken the lead in promoting political and security dialogue and consultation by establishing the ASEAN Regional Forum. Nineteen ministers from the Asia-Pacific region and the European Union had attended its first meeting in July to discuss cooperation and had decided to carry out some practical confidence-building measures. He welcomed the positive development regarding the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and expressed the hope that negotiations would eventually lead to lasting peace and stability. To support efforts to maintain international peace and security, he favoured reform and revitalization of the United Nations.

A new culture of development cooperation that included new definitions of "security" and of "development" was needed, he said. Security must involve people, and take into consideration political, economic, environmental and social factors. Development must be seen in the dimensions outlined by the Secretary-General. Work on the Agenda for Development must promote self-reliance as well as interdependence of States. While development was primarily a national responsibility, the international community also had a role to play. The completion of the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks and the creation of the World Trade Organization held out the prospect of significant benefits for the world economy, he added.

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The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) began its general debate on the world economic situation on Friday. Several speakers touched on the growing interdependence of the world economy and the role of the United Nations in addressing the causes and consequences of that phenomenon.

Algeria, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" countries and China, said most developing countries were not benefitting from improved economic

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conditions. In restructuring the United Nations, the chronic lack of financial resources for operational activities for development must be dealt with. Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said such issues as poverty and the environment had taken on a global character. Human security was increasingly jeopardized by disasters and conflict, but the United Nations was not sufficiently addressing the causes of violent conflict.

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, said growing interdependence provided a chance to envisage a global and just human society. He called on Committee members not to lose sight of that historic opportunity.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has launched its winter aid programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is experiencing far fewer problems than in the past two winters. It cited several reasons for the improved situation: a halt in fighting across much of Bosnia enabled unprecedented access for aid convoys; a great deal of material was delivered in July and August; many supplies provided over the last two years remained useable; there have been fewer population displacements this year; and supplies of power, gas and water have been improved in many areas.

However, the UNHCR expressed concern regarding several problem areas, including Sarajevo, Gorazde, Srebrenica, Zepa and Bihac. Sarajevo receives more than 80 per cent of its aid from the UNHCR airlift, which has been interrupted several times in the past three months because of security problems. In the eastern enclaves of Gorazde, Zepa and Srebrenica, UNHCR was able to deliver only about 30 per cent of requirements in September, and only slightly more in August.

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